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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002023

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR J. BADER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [ECON](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: ACEH -- FORMER FINNISH PRESIDENT UNDERSCORES NEED  
TO KEEP REGION ON RADAR SCREEN

Classified By: DCM Ted Osius, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The Ambassador met with Martti Ahtisaari, the former Finnish President, on December 9. Ahtisaari--who helped facilitate the 2005 peace accord--commented that the situation in Aceh seemed to be calm and it was positive that the recent elections had gone smoothly. Aceh could not be allowed to slip back, however, and momentum had to be maintained, points he would emphasize in meetings with the GOI and with Aceh authorities. He thanked the USG for remaining firmly engaged re the situation. Ahtisaari added that he planned to visit Washington probably in March next year. END SUMMARY.

SITUATION IS BASICALLY POSITIVE

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met with Martti Ahtisaari of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), an international NGO devoted to conflict resolution on December 9. The Nobel Peace Prize Winner and former President of Finland was in Jakarta to continue his CMI-sponsored mission to Indonesia focused on the peace process in Aceh Province.

¶3. (C) Ahtisaari--who will travel to Aceh on December 10--noted that Indonesia's legislative and presidential elections earlier this year had proceeded quite smoothly in Aceh with only minor problems. He thanked the USG for its assistance in working with the GOI and actors in Aceh to help ensure such a smooth process, which helped further solidify the peace in Aceh. (Note: With Ahtisaari playing a key role as a facilitator, the GOI and ex-militants affiliated with the Free Aceh Movement--known by the acronym "GAM"--signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August 2005 which effectively ended the decades-long conflict in the western Indonesian region.)

VITAL NEED TO MAINTAIN FOCUS

¶4. (C) Ahtisaari added that there were vital reasons to maintain the focus on Aceh. While the GOI and the ex-militants seemed to be getting along in relatively positive fashion on the political side right now, there appeared to be a lack of a vision of the area's post-MOU future and how to get there. This was having a negative impact on people's confidence and on the economic situation in the area which was in need of improvement. Aceh Governor Irwandi Yusuf meant well, but he was not a fully effective manager, including regarding development assistance. Irwandi at times, Ahtisaari remarked, did not fully appreciate the need to assist everyone in the region in addition to his allies from Partai Aceh (a political party which is linked to the former GAM).

#### ACEH NEEDS A POST-MOU VISION

¶5. (C) The Ambassador agreed with Ahtisaari on the need to keep Aceh very much on the radar screen. Just because an MOU had been concluded and the 2009 elections had proceeded smoothly did not mean that all would remain positive. Irwandi, in particular, needed to up his game and do better in enunciating a mid- to long-term vision for the region. So far, Irwandi had not done this and many in the province were left wondering what was next for them. Instead of focusing on the future, in fact, Aceh had sent out an unfortunate signal when its local legislature had passed a law mandating various Sharia-inspired rules with stoning as a potential punishment. To be fair, Irwandi had suffered a stroke some time back and was only now re-focusing on the tasks at hand.

¶6. (C) The Ambassador noted that the GOI also had to focus--there were many pressing issues facing Indonesia, but it could not allow Aceh to slip back. All of this pointed to the urgent need for the GOI and the Aceh authorities to get on the same sheet of music and make a plan for next steps a high priority. Ahtisaari agreed, saying that he would make such points in his meetings with the GOI and in Aceh. The Ambassador said the USG would continue to work with other donor countries on next steps.

#### PLANS FOR U.S. VISIT

¶7. (C) Ahtisaari related that he planned to be in the U.S. around the March timeframe. He looked forward to discussions with U.S. officials while in Washington.

JAKARTA 00002023 002 OF 002

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